

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

5 A mold assembly for blow molding plastic articles is provided having an upper mold member, a lower mold member and a lower support member. The lower mold member is preferably a relatively lightweight plate having a generally centrally located molding cavity matingly matched with an upper molding cavity in the upper mold member. The lower mold member is moved horizontally and optionally vertically beneath an extrusion head as a molten parison is extruded. The lower mold member is then transported to, and positioned within, the lower support member. The upper mold member is then closed over the lower mold member and lower support to close the mold assembly. The molten parison is then expanded in the mold cavity. After the molding operation, the plastic part may be removed and the lower mold member may be cooled by immersion in a cooling fluid. The apparatus to move the lower mold member during extrusion of the parison and to the molding station may be a robotic arm. The lower mold member is relatively lightweight so that it may be efficiently moved by the robot arm while the necessary structural support is provided by the lower support member.

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